121 178 855 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West African family and tribal traditions. Among West African tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island 121 627 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were • 623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which [177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the [692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 888 178 121 [177] Although their functions have been limited, the elder Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African 121 855 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea Island and West African child rearing practices.